

Press Secretary on June 15 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Janez Drnovsek of Slovenia in Kranj, Slovenia

June 16, 2001

The President. [*Inaudible*]*—*the Prime Minister came to Austin to visit me when I was the Governor of Texas, along with then-Ambassador, now the Foreign Minister. We had a wonderful visit then, and I'm looking forward to a great exchange now. We had a good visit in the car coming here. And I'm so grateful for his hospitality to this most spectacular and beautiful country. It's really beautiful.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1 p.m. at Brdo Castle. In his remarks, he referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Dimitrij Rupel of Slovenia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Vladimir Putin of Russia in Kranj

June 16, 2001

Q. Mr. President, any thoughts about this first meeting?

President Putin. First impression? It was a good first impression.

President Bush. I rest my case. [*Laughter*] We're going to have a very good meeting, and I've been looking forward to this for a long period of time. We find we have a lot in common, and I'm so honored the President came here. I know it's inconvenient to travel such a long distance, Mr. President—

President Putin. We know about the very latest statements of President Bush in Warsaw, and that's a very good foundation for us to proceed.

President Bush. Thank you, all.

NOTE: The exchange began at 2:45 p.m. at Brdo Castle. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

The President's News Conference With President Putin in Kranj

June 16, 2001

President Bush. Good afternoon. President Putin and I have just concluded 2 hours of straightforward and productive meetings. We had a good discussion of our views of Russian-American relations and of the changing world at the beginnings of this new century. Our countries have common interests, and we share great responsibilities.

My meeting with President Putin today is an important step in building a constructive, respectful relationship with Russia, a relationship that has the potential to benefit not only our two countries but also the world. Russia is an important country with vast potential. When Russia and the United States work together in a constructive way, we can make the world a safer and more prosperous place.

I enjoyed the opportunity to meet President Putin in person for the first time. I am convinced that he and I can build a relationship of mutual respect and candor. And I'm convinced that it's important for the world that we do so.

More than a decade after the cold war ended, it is time to move beyond suspicion and toward straight talk, beyond mutually assured destruction and toward mutually earned respect. As we work together to address the world as it is, not as it used to be, it is important that we not only talk differently; we also must act differently.

We have great opportunities to cooperate on economic, commercial, regional, and security issues. President Putin and I have agreed to launch an extensive dialog about a wide range of issues that we can constructively address together.

We also discussed the importance of sound investment climate to improve Russia's future economic prosperity. I was so impressed that he was able to simplify his tax code in Russia with a flat tax. I'm not so sure I'll have the same success with our Congress.

We must continue a dialog, so I'm prepared to send both Secretary O'Neill and Secretary Evans to Moscow soon to further our discussions. I want to encourage Russian